776 believed to be the creator and originator of all things but he is not worshipped. Birth and death are ascribed to his action. According to Roscoe, Nyasi is found in large trees, and in time of trouble or sickness offerings are made to him of an animal killed under a large tree; the meat is eaten at a little distance away.(1)

[777] Johnston states that the Luo believe in a supreme god, Chieng, which is the name for the sun.(2) Stam, however, relegates the sun to an inferior position and writes that when a man comes out of his house in the morning he spits to the east and then to the north, south and west and implores the sun to give him good luck.(3) Northcote states that Luo worship the sun and, to a lesser degree, the moon. A similar spitting ritual is practised when the new moon appears.(4)

It is impossible at present to give a comprehensive account of Luo beliefs from the scanty information available.

ANCESTRAL SPIRITS

775 There is very little information on the ancestral cult. Evans-Pritchard describes a troublesome ghost *(jacien,* pl. *jociendi)* and the Luo methods of dealing with it. *Jacien* is the Luo equivalent of the Shilluk *cien*, the Acholi *lacen*, Lango *chyen* and the Anuak *acieni*. A spirit which has been forgotten by the living; the ghost of a man who died resentful or angry - or of a murdered man whose kin have not exacted revenge - any [753 of these may become a *jacien*, and cause harm to those who wronged it. The Luo regard ghosts as one of the principal causes of sickness and other misfortunes, and, since it is held that almost any wrong done to a kinsman may be punished by him after death, this belief is a powerful sanction of conduct within the family and kinship group.(5) 626]

●755 The diviner *(ajuago)* discovers the cause of sickness and, if it is due to a particular spirit, sacrifices are offered at his grave with appro-775 priate ritual. If the ghost is not appeased by this attention, another magician is called in, the *mugalu*. To protect the sick man's homestead the *mugalu* buries in or near it a pot containing medicines. In the last resort the *jalilo* is called in; an ox is sacrifices and the ghost warned that if he does not cease his activities his bones will be dug up, burned and the ashes thrown into the lake or marsh.

775 Normally, a ghost only haunts a kinsman, but a man who has been mur-783 dered may haunt his murderer. Purificatory rites are performed for someone who has killed a man in battle; these are conducted by a man called *jagut* who has himself slain a man in battle.

775 It is believed that some ghosts become nature spirits dwelling in water and air, while others occupy the gourds used by diviners and answer the questions put to them.

(1) Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, 1915, p.291.
(2) Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1902, Vol.II, p.791.
(3) Stam, *Anthropos*, 1910, p.360.
(4) Northcote, *J.R.A.I.*, 1907, p.63
(5) Evans-Pritchard, *Man*, 1950 (July), No.133, p.86.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

CHAPTER XXVI

SICKNESS, DEATH, BURIAL, WARFARE, INDUSTRIES, RELIGION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Treatment of the sick—ghostly possession—death and mourning—death of a wife—manner of conducting warfare—treatment of a warrior who has slain one of the enemy—agricultural pursuits—cow-keeping—oxen used as riding animals—mode of building—religious beliefs—terms of relationships.

Treatment of the sick. Sickness is thought to be due to one of two causes: it may be, and the people think most frequently is, the result of magic which has been worked by some person who wishes to give pain or even to cause death because of a grievance, real or imaginary; or it may be due to some ghost. Under either circumstance, when a serious case of sickness occurs, the family seek the aid of a medicine-man who by his various tests and incantations discovers the cause; and, in a case where magic has been worked, he not only discovers the cause but also discloses the name of the culprit, who is thereupon sought and asked to give his motive for afflicting the sick person, and is paid to release him from the spell. Should the man have intended to kill the other because he has suffered some discourtesy or received some offence at his hands, he would probably have speared his shadow, so that the sick person will die unless the spell or magic is removed. Again, it may be that some magic has been worked and certain objects have been hidden near the house which are causing the sickness; these have to be removed and the spell broken before any drugs or treatment will avail the sick man. The perpetrator will only remove these when his grievance has been settled and he has received the needful compensation. In the case of a ghost, the medicine-man will tell which ghost is working the trouble and why it is thus causing sickness.

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[P. 285]

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

753 The ghosts are usually those of grandparents who afflict
755 grandchildren because their father has failed to fulfil the
775 duties of a son to his father in his old age, either by direct unkindness or by neglect. The medicine-man will now order
769 a shrine to be built by the grave of the grandparent concerned, and the sick person's father offers a goat or a sheep at the grave, pouring out the blood as an offering upon the ground, and then eating the meat on the spot with a few relatives. The medicine-man is afterwards able to treat the sick man with reasonable hope of restoring him to health, because the offended ghost has now been pacified and will allow the sick man to benefit by the treatment. Sometimes sickness is transferred to another person by rubbing herbs over the sick man and burying them in the road for some other person to walk over and thus contract the disease.

828 **Ghostly possession.** Fits are supposed to be the manifesta-
775 tion of ghostly possession. They can often be overcome by giving the person warm blood to drink drawn from the veins
761 of an ox and by feeding the patient with a generous diet. During the time a fit lasts the man is held down, if he is violent, until the attack is over. Should a man fall into the fire during a fit, no help is rendered and he is allowed to burn to death, because it is said that the ghost has claimed him and would resent any interference and would affect the person who attempted to rescue the stricken man with a similar malady. A drum beaten near a person subject to fits is said to bring on an attack of the malady.

764 **Death and mourning.** When a person dies, his legs are bent up into a squatting posture, the right arm is raised under the head and the death-wail commences. The dead are not washed but merely have their ornaments stripped off; an ox or a cow is then killed and the body is wrapped in the skin and is stitched up tightly in it. The grave is dug in the house. When the body is laid in it, all the relatives stand round with their backs towards it and, at a given signal, they stoop down and with their hands scrape the earth into the grave without looking where it falls. After they have scraped in earth for some moments they walk out of the house, and the brother of

12: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936)1950
FL11 Luo FL11

775 133 In one form or another the word *cien*, and in some degree the notion of ghostly vengeance for which
171 it stands, have been recorded for a number of Nilotic languages: *cien* for the Shilluk and Nuer, *acien* for the Dinka, *acieni* for the Anuak, *tchien* for the Luo of the Bahr al-Ghazal, *lacen* for the Acholi, and *chyen* for the Lango.

753 Very little is known about this concept among the Luo of
●755 Kenya. Roscoe (*The Northern Bantu*, 1915, pp. 285f. and
775 289) tells us that sickness may be due to a ghost, and that a medicine-man is consulted to find out which ghost is causing the trouble and the cause of its dissatisfaction. These troublesome ghosts are usually those of grandparents who afflict their grandchildren because their children have been neglectful of filial duties. The medicine-man orders a shrine to be built by the grave of the aggrieved grandparent and the sick person's father there offers a sacrifice. Ghosts may also possess persons and cause them to have fits. When a man kills another in war the ghost of the dead man is thought to cling to his slayer until it is released by ceremonies. Other writers on the Luo do not add to this information, and in view of our ignorance about the subject I record what few notes I have on it.

775 A troublesome ghost is called *jacien* (plur. *jociendi*), a
626 word translated 'devil' by the Fathers of St. Joseph's Society (*A Handbook of the Kavirondo Language*, 1920, p. 8). When a ghost is aggrieved it is unhappy among the dead and may cause injury to those who wronged it in life, the verb *cieno* and the noun *cien* being used to describe this ghostly vengeance. In the course of my inquiries I was told that the following are typical reasons for a dead person haunting a kinsman: a man is killed and his kinsmen do not exact vengeance or compensation for his death; a man dies unmarried owing to lack of cattle; a man is blamed for some action and commits suicide; a girl is forced into marriage and commits suicide; a son dies while resentful because his father has favoured his brothers; a married woman dies after being accused of witchcraft and beaten; a man dies in a state of shame for some action of his, or in resentment for some affront; a woman dies after an

[p. 86 B]

775 unsettled quarrel with her husband or one of her co-wives;
626 and a ghost is forgotten by his kin. It is said that if a corpse smells it is a sign that the dead person is ill disposed. As the Luo regard the ghosts as one of the principal causes of sickness and other misfortunes and since it is believed that almost any wrong done to a kinsman may be punished by him after his death, it may be supposed that this representation is a powerful sanction of conduct within the family and kin. I was told that any old person who is neglected may cause a relative to be more attentive by the threat 'You will see me,' meaning that when the person is dead he will haunt those who have neglected him unless they make amends. People who are happy and contented in life do not cause trouble when they are dead. It is the disgruntled and resentful who cause trouble.

753 Luo who fall sick get a diviner (*ajuoga*) to discover the
● 755 cause, and if he says that the sickness is due to a particular
775 ghost on account of some grievance they hasten to compen-
[787] sate (*colo*) the ghost for the wrong they have done him by sacrificing an animal or fowl at his grave. It is customary to sacrifice a quail or fowl for a sick woman and a sheep or goat for a sick man. When a beast is sacrificed it is first tethered while whoever is conducting the ceremony makes an invocation (*lamo*) over it. If the sacrifice is acceptable to the ghost the animal urinates. They then rub its back (*wiro*) with the moist earth where it has urinated, and afterwards sacrifice it. The meat is eaten by the sick man's kin and a strip of the skin is tied round his wrist.

755 If the *jacien* is not appeased by sacrifice they may get a
775 magician called *mugalu* to protect the sick man's homestead. He buries a pot containing medicines in or just outside the homestead. If the ghost continues to cause trouble they summon an exorcist (*jadilo*). He first sacrifices an ox and warns the dead man that if he is not content with this sacrifice he will dig up his bones and burn them and throw the ashes into lake or marsh. Luo told me that they prefer to get a Bantu to do this for them, if it is found to be necessary, and that sometimes instead of digging up the dead man's bones the exorcist makes a hole in the grave and pours boiling water down it.

[p. 86 c]

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

754 The evil eye, it is claimed, can make a sound man sick, and kill a man who is ill, or an unborn child. Most diseases are attributed to the evil eye or to malignant spirits, and so the best remedy is to make as much noise near the sick man as possible, in order to drive the evil ones away. In addition to this universal remedy, the Jaluo use a considerable variety of herbal medicines, and they are also expert at wet and dry cupping. Sometimes, however, the treatment is of a distinctly quack nature. Some time ago a native practitioner brought a case of assault against the husband of one of his patients. The defence set up was that the accused called in the prosecutor to treat his wife, and that the latter, after much cogitation, ordered the woman to climb to the roof of her hut and stay there till she was better. Unfortunately, the patient died under her open-air cure; her husband laid her death at the doctor's door and took steps to settle his account with the professor of healing arts, with a club. On another occasion the writer was summoned to an accident in the lime quarry in the district. One of the injured was suffering from a broken thigh and internal injuries. He put on a temporary splint, sent for the Indian apothecary, and gave orders that the patient was not to be moved in the "interim." Next day, however, the apothecary found, on arriving at the scene of the accident, that a Kavirondo surgeon had been called in; the latter was much puzzled by the complications of the case, and, in order to make a better diagnosis, cut the man open, with the not unnatural result that he died.

755 757 [752]

789 But, although the wizard is held in abhorrence and dread, the rain-maker is greatly esteemed: his success probably depends upon a knowledge of the signs of the heavens, but his methods are as follows: His village is to be found as a rule near a big tree, which he asserts is sacred; when rain is wanted he gathers some herbs and puts them in a large pot containing water, which he boils beneath the holy tree. Of the decoction thus prepared he draws off a little into a smaller pot, above which he squats on his haunches. Next a reed is produced, and through this the rain-maker draws up a little of the liquid and then squirts it forth into the air after blowing through the reed and causing the fluid in the pot to bubble; the whole process being punctuated by voluble mutterings and *abracadabra*. A reputation for uncanny powers, however, can be obtained even more easily than this, as the following anecdote will show. Some time ago, during the lesser rains, the natives of the valley in which the writer's station is situate, came and complained that a famous rain-maker was deflecting all the rain to the hills, so that the crops in the valley were dying. Would the Bwana (master) send a policeman and arrest the evil-doer? The Bwana did not see his way to such an arbitrary proceeding, but, being curious to see the wizard, scribbled a few crooked lines on a sheet of paper and told the applicants to show this to the rain-maker as a sign that the Bwana wished to speak with him. Next day they came back and said that the wizard had refused to come for the reason that the letter was not genuine but had emanated from an Indian shopkeeper; the writer told them to wait a few days, meaning to postpone the matter *sine die*. It so happened, however, that that evening a tremendous